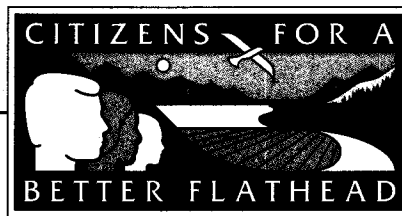


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February 6, 2007

SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

EXHIBIT NO. 13

DATE 2-8-07
t: 406.738.8993
citizens@flathead.org
BILL NO. SB 201

Senate Committee on Local Government

Chairperson Gillan, Senator Laible, Committee Members
State Capitol Room 335, 3pm
Fax: 444-4875

To the Members of the Senate Committee on Local Government,

On Thursday, February 8, the Committee will be hearing a vital piece of legislation that will set a precedent for land use planning in Montana. SB 201 addresses a current lack of development standards and puts in place a more predictable and cooperative plan.

Flathead County is the second fastest growing county in Montana. Many developments are currently approved haphazardly, without appropriate consideration to future growth, public infrastructure, property rights, or a cooperative partnership with city-county planning. Background information and current levels of service often seem inadequate. Without this vital baseline data, our county cannot make informed decisions regarding the impacts of growth on the area's economy, character, and environmental quality.

SB 201 lays the framework for cities and counties to work together to plan for future growth based upon census data and past growth patterns. This allows for greater predictability in decision making. SB 201 mandates the inventory of existing public facilities and sets standards for cities and counties to plan for services in growth areas. This planning improves public health and safety and supports the continuation of our high quality of life in the Flathead.

Citizens for a Better Flathead, founded in 1992, represents over 1400 members, a growing group of concerned residents in Flathead County, who actively work for positive and cost effective solutions to the growth related issues affecting our county. We urge the Committee to pass SB 201 to promote predictability in developing areas and a cooperative work environment between cities and counties.

Sincerely,

Mayre Flowers
Executive Director
Citizens for a Better Flathead